



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC  
RELATIONS

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**Third Joint Committee Meeting  
CEFTA 2006  
Podgorica, 29 October 2009**

**Statement by Mr. Vilim Primorac  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Mr. Chairman,  
Esteemed colleagues ministers,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to have an opportunity to greet you and attend today's meeting. We are witnessing CEFTA Agreement getting immense attention of the public and we have to direct and monitor its implementation with same attention. Today, at this meeting, in capacity of the Joint Committee being the highest body for implementation of our joint, regional Agreement, we have to pay particular attention to its consistent application in the sense that all have benefits but not at the expense of others.

At the end of the third year of Agreement's application, certain effects can already be seen and felt. I believe we would agree that they have not reached their maximum and that both agreement and capacities of mutual economic and trade cooperation provide for much greater space. It is on all of us which way and to what extent we will use them.

Implementation of the Agreement in these three years, from Bosnia and Herzegovina's angle, had its good and less good moments. An actual economic and financial crisis, which significantly affected our region too, created additional pressure both within country and in mutual trade relations. Having in mind the structure and volume of trade exchange within region, we in Bosnia and Herzegovina particularly experienced the weight of such challenge. In spite of that, we remained consistent in our position truly believing that only such approach can bring positive results over the long term. Exposed to great, sometimes

grounded pressures of public and business community, we strongly pleaded for consistent observance of the Agreement regardless of whom it may be the case.

Having in mind all said, in my today's short statement I would like to draw your attention to two issues we in Bosnia and Herzegovina find of specific importance.

First, CEFTA Agreement presents our common ownership and, in spite of differences in terms of economic, legislative, institutional and other forms of development, all of us have to approach its implementation with equal dedication and sincerity as well as to recognise and gain benefit. Liberalisation of trade in terms of reduction or total elimination of customs duties brought into the limelight some other forms of barriers which burden or completely prevent flow of goods. Bosnia and Herzegovina exporters may have been exposed to such practice mostly. We endeavoured and still do endeavour to present such cases in an argumented way and solve them through mutual consultations but through search of systemic solutions as well. In my view this would be the best way which over the long term brings benefit to all. In that course, I am inviting you to approach resolving of these issues immediately and with maximal seriousness. Without such approach, I am afraid we compromise objectives of the Agreement itself and bring ourselves into situations where circumstances dictate solutions.

Second, analysis of trade flows within the Agreement and relation with other trade partners show that once complementary economies became mutually opposing to certain extend. It is clear that such situation created additional pressure on individual sectors of all of us and is unsustainable over the long term. What I would like to say? This regional Agreement could be our joint opportunity for better economic effects not only within region but wider. Regardless of individual economic strength, joint activities could have at least dual effect: lessening of pressure in mutual trade and that way greater presence in the third markets.

Finally, let me sincerely thank our hosts for their hospitality and excellent organisation of not only this but whole range of events during 2009. Apart from that, I would like to stress out that this 2009 brought numerous challenges in the Agreement's implementation. Montenegro, as the Chair in Office, showed enviable level of readiness to face them while constantly taking case of both joint and individual interests and specificities of all Parties. It was extremely difficult task and you completed it in an excellent way.

Wishing successful work at today's meeting and in all future activities I am sincerely greeting you once again.